

**Proclamation 7712—National  
Disability Employment Awareness  
Month, 2003**

*October 3, 2003*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

For Americans with disabilities, employment is vital to independence, empowerment, and quality of life. During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we recognize the many contributions citizens with disabilities make to our society, and we reaffirm our commitment to helping them achieve their full inclusion in our workforce.

Today, Americans with disabilities enjoy improved access to education, government services, public accommodations, transportation, telecommunications, and employment opportunities. The landmark Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) removed barriers and enabled many individuals with disabilities to find more opportunities to use their gifts and talents in the workplace. This progress has made our Nation stronger, more productive, and more just. People with disabilities still encounter challenges, however, to their full participation in American society.

In February 2001, I launched the New Freedom Initiative to address these challenges, to fulfill the promises of the ADA, and to move toward an America where all our citizens live and work with dignity and freedom. This comprehensive plan is helping Americans with disabilities learn and develop skills, engage in productive work, make choices about their daily lives, and participate fully in their communities.

A key component of the New Freedom Initiative is our commitment to integrate individuals with disabilities into the workforce. We have made substantial progress toward this goal. The Department of Justice has established an ADA Business Connection, a series of meetings between representatives of the business and disability communities to

open dialogue that will promote greater understanding and increased voluntary compliance with the ADA. Also, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Social Security Administration are implementing the landmark “Ticket to Work” program that makes it possible for millions of Americans with disabilities to no longer have to choose between having a job and receiving health care. And the Department of Labor has established two national technical assistance centers on workforce and disability that offer training, technical assistance, and information to improve access for all in the workforce development system.

By working together to open doors of opportunity for citizens with disabilities, we can help fulfill the promise of our great Nation.

To recognize the contributions of Americans with disabilities and to encourage all citizens to help ensure their full inclusion in the workforce, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 121), has designated October of each year as “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.”

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 2003 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. I call upon government officials, labor leaders, employers, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this third day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 7, 2003]

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## **Proclamation 7713—Fire Prevention Week, 2003**

*October 3, 2003*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

More than 1.7 million fires strike American homes, parks, and businesses each year. This devastation costs lives, causes injuries, ruins property, and disrupts businesses. While fires are powerful and destructive, many fires are preventable. During Fire Prevention Week, we join with our Nation's first responders to help prevent fires and ensure the safety of our homes and communities.

As the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week, the National Fire Protection Association is joining forces with the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and the United States Fire Administration to emphasize the importance of being prepared to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities. This year's Fire Prevention Week theme is "When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!"

Across our country, most fire-related deaths occur where people feel safest—in their own homes. National surveys reveal that most Americans underestimate the risk of fire in their homes and lack an emergency response plan. Fires can grow quickly, and individuals may have as few as 2 minutes to evacuate. Working smoke detectors give people more time to escape fires. At least 94 percent of American homes are equipped with smoke alarms, yet most home fire deaths happen in homes where smoke alarms are not working. By installing and maintaining working smoke alarms on every level of the home, having a fire emergency response plan, and evacuating if the alarm sounds, families and individuals can be ready to respond to a fire.

This week also reminds us of the dangers that brave first responders face as they risk their lives to fight fires and protect our communities, our people, and our natural resources. Our fire services respond to more than 20 million emergency calls a year. Americans are grateful for their courage, skill, and commitment to public safety, and

we honor the sacrifice of those who have been injured or killed in their efforts to protect us. Through fire safety and prevention, we can save lives, including those of our firefighters and other first responders.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 5 through October 11, 2003, as Fire Prevention Week. On Sunday, October 5, 2003, in accordance with Public Law 107-51, flags will be flown at half staff on all Federal office buildings in honor of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service. I urge all Americans to protect their homes by installing smoke detectors where needed and regularly checking their existing smoke detectors. These small efforts will help make our communities safer for all.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this third day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

**George W. Bush**

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## **Proclamation 7714—Marriage Protection Week, 2003**

*October 3, 2003*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Marriage is a sacred institution, and its protection is essential to the continued strength of our society. Marriage Protection Week provides an opportunity to focus our efforts on preserving the sanctity of marriage and on building strong and healthy marriages in America.

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman, and my Administration is working